**Open sky policy**

558. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA:
SHRIMATI SHOBHANABHARTIA:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Directorate General of Civil Aviation has moved a proposal to follow an open sky policy for four months beginning from November, 2006;

(b) if so, whether during the open sky policy, international airlines are allowed to increase frequency or bring in larger aircraft irrespective of capacity that they are allowed under the existing air services bilateral agreement;

(c) if so, whether Government are keen to ensure passengers do not feel inconvenience and seats are easily available during the upcoming winter season; and

(d) if so, by when a final decision in this regard is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (d) To meet the additional traffic demand during the peak winter season, a limited open sky policy has been declared by the Government for the period 15th December, 2006 to 31 st January, 2007. Under this policy, all designated foreing airlines are permitted to mount as many services as they wish to their available points of call. Besides, they are also permitted to upgrade their equipment at their descretion on their existing frequencies during the period 15th November, 2006 to 28th February, 2007.

**Merger of Air India and Indian Airlines**

559. SHRIAMAR SINGH:
SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL:
SHRIABUASIMAZMI:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are planning to merge Air India and Indian Airlines;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the details of benefits of this merger for Government and all employees?